24:Meulen and Wissmann T-3 (1931)1932 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

been the borderland of two kingdoms, which naturally would not be the most favourable place for setting up inscriptions. Frontier defences are never centres of culture. Furthermore the stone here is not favourable for incising: it is too brittle. All the texts deciphered for us by Mordtmann are votary inscriptions (proskynemas) to the national god, Sīn.

From Ḥuṣn Thōbe we walked back to the main wādī, in whose midst, on a great lonely rock, remains of the walls of Ḥuṣn el-ʿUrr still rise to a considerable height. We met the caravan here and, uniting our forces, tried to get at a piece of cut stone that was cemented into the upper part of the remains of the walls. After much effort we succeeded. It turned out that we had detached a capital of whitish sandstone, particularly well-hewn on its four planes. The capital was too heavy for transport on our camels, so Von Wissmann made the drawing reproduced here.[1] The skill of the artist who, in ancient times, made this head of a column is clearly shown in the undamaged portions. The sculptor seems to have depicted hunting scenes. Mounted men fighting with lions are represented on one plane; on another are very good reproductions of the ibex (*wiʿl*), an animal which plays a great part in the folklore of Ḥaḍramaut. The *wiʿl* hunt is still the favourite sport of the Ḥaḍramīs, although strongly disapproved of by their religious leaders on account of the ceremonies of evidently heathen origin accompanying it. The heavy, notched horns of the ibex, gracefully bending backwards, are, up to this day, to be found as trophies decorating the façade of many a house in Ḥaḍramaut.

The smaller hewn stone that we had found in the ruins on the outward journey was dug up again. This stone, flat and of the same white sandstone as the capital, appeared to bear on front and back an identical sculpture, representing a bunch of grapes with a few leaves, a motive that also occurs here and there on the decorated surfaces of the capital. We wished to take this stone with us to Terīm as an addition

[1] See p. 178.

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THE CARVED CAPITAL OF ḤUṢN EL-'URR.